

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 05399 171711Z

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SUBJ: DEMIREL LONDON TIMES INTERVIEW ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS

1. MOST OF THE GREEK PRESS ON JULY 17 GAVE PROMINENT TREATMENT TO AN INTERVIEW WITH TURKISH PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL REPORTED IN THE LONDON TIMES BY ITS CORRESPONDENT MARIO MODIANO THE PREVIOUS DAY. THE INTERVIEW WAS ABOUT GREEK-TURKISH TENSIONS IN THE AEGEAN.

2. THE TO VIMA (LIBERAL, OPPOSITION) HEADLINE READ "DEMIREL: WE NEVER PLANNED AN ATTACK AGAINST GREECE"; KATHIMERINI (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) "DEMIREL DECLARED THAT WAR AGAINST GREECE IS EXCLUDED: BUT "TURKISH LEADERS' STRESS THAT AN EXTENSION OF GREEK TERRITORIAL WATERS WOULD BE CONSIDERED AS CAUSE FOR WAR"; TA NEA (LIBERAL, OPPOSITION) "DEMIREL: HE REASSURES BUT HE ALSO THREATENS"; ATHINAIKI (PRO-PAPANDREOU) "DEMIREL: WE WILL NOT ATTACK GREECE".

3. THE MAIN POINTS OF THE INTERVIEW - AS CARRIED BY TO VIMA WHICH GAVE IT THE FULLEST COVERAGE - DEAL WITH DEMIREL'S ASSERTION THAT TURKEY HAS NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS TOWARDS GREECE, UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 ATHENS 05399 171711Z

BUT OF COURSE IS PREPARED TO DEFEND ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS.

ON THE QUESTION OF THE CREATION OF THE FOURTH TURKISH ARMY, OR "THE AEGEAN ARMY", DEMIREL DECLARED THAT IT HAS NO RELATIONSHIP TO THREATS AGAINST OTHER COUNTRIES BUT SERVES EXCLUSIVELY TURKISH DEFENSIVE PRUPOSES. IN THIS CONNECTION HE NOTED THAT THE MILITARY REINFORCEMENT OF THE GREEK ISLANDS OF THE AEGEAN CONSTITUTES A FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS. CONSEQUENTLY, DEMIREL STATED, "ONE SHOULD NOT EXPECT TURKEY TO OVERLOOK THE EVENTUAL DANGERS TO ITS SECURITY AS THEY EMERGE FROM THIS UNILATERAL ACTION OF GREECE".

4. TO VIMA FURTHER REPORTS THAT THE TIMES CORRESPONDENT WORTE THAT TURKISH OFFICIALS CHARACTERIZED GREECE'S ANXIETIES (ABOUT POSSIBLE TURKISH MILITARY ACTION) AS "ILLOGICAL". THESE OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY INSIST THAT GREECE SHOULD SEEK TURKISH VIEWS ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE AEGEAN SO THAT THEY CAN BE SOLVED PEACEFULLY. AT THE SAME TIME THE TIMES STORY REPORTS THAT TURKISH LEADERS WOULD CONSIDER THE EVENTUAL EXTENTION OF GREEK TERRITORIAL WATERS FROM 6 TO 12 MILES AS A CAUSE FOR WAR BECAUSE IT WOULD MAKE THE AEGEAN A SEMI-CLOSED GREEK SEA. BEFORE ANY SUCH ACTION IS ATTEMPTED, HOWEVER, THE TURKS REPORTEDLY INSIST ON THE NEED FOR DISCUSSIONS.

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